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# The Classical Weekly

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## SOME ILLUSTRATIONS OF JUVENAL'S THIRD SATIRE

(Concluded from page 114)

Most effective, too, is Juvenal's description (190-222) of the dangers and hardships due to fires at Rome—hardships that the poor man in particular felt. In this connection, Gellius 15.1 is decidedly interesting. Gellius and some others were escorting the rhetorician Antonius Julianus to his home,

cum inde subeuntes Montem Cispium conspicimus insulam <apartment house> occupatam igni multis arduisque tabulatis editam et propinqua iam omnia flagrare vasto incendio. Tum quispiam ibi ex comitibus Iuliani "Magni" inquit "reditus urbanorum praediorum, sed pericula sunt longe maxima Si quid autem posset remedii fore, ut ne tam adsidue domus Romae arderent, venum hercle dedissem res rusticas et urbicas emissem".

This outburst leads Julianus to tell his *comes* that, if he had read the nineteenth book of the *Annales* of Q. Quadrigarius,

docuisset te profecto Archelaus, regis Mithradati praefectus, qua medela quaque sollertia ignem defenderes, ut ne ulla aedificatio e ligno correpta atque insinuata flammis arderet.

In his note on verse 197, Mr. J. D. Lewis, author of a very sensible edition and translation of Juvenal, writes as follows: "Fires seem to have been more frequent at Rome than in New York". One cannot help thinking of what Dickens said, in his *American notes*, Chapter VI (he is speaking of his visit in 1842):

What is this intolerable tolling of great bells, and crashing of wheels, and shouting in the distance? A fire. And what is that deep red light in the opposite direction? Another fire. What are these charred and blackened walls we stand before? A dwelling where a fire has been. It was more than hinted in an official report, not long ago, that some of these conflagrations were not wholly accidental, and that speculation and enterprise found a field even in flame; but be this as it may, there was a fire last night, there are two to-night, and you may lay an even wager that there will be at least one to-morrow.

Later in the same chapter, still speaking of New York, Dickens says:

There are in New York excellent hospitals and schools, literary institutions and libraries; an admirable fire department (as indeed it should be, having constant practice). . . .

Dickens's caustic reference to the fires in New York City as not always accidental makes one think of Juvenal 220-222:

Meliora ac plura reponit  
Persicus, orborum lautissimus, et merito iam  
suspectus, tamquam ipse suas incenderit aedes.

On this passage the editors frequently quote Martial 3.52:

Empta domus fuerat tibi, Tongiliane, ducentis:  
abstulit hanc nimium casus in urbe frequens.  
Collatum est decies. Rogo, non potes ipse videri  
incendisse tuam, Tongiliane, domum?

I urge the reader to study again that splendid passage (232-267) in which Juvenal dwells on the dangers—involving even the danger of death—to which the poor man is exposed through the crowding of the streets of Rome. Let him dwell particularly on the picture, in verses 235-267, of the man who has been the victim of a breakdown of a wagon carrying the *saxa Ligustica*. In such a case, says Juvenal, always the carcass of the *vulgus*, crushed to atoms, perishes like a breath. Then come verses 261-267:

Domus interea secura patellas  
iam lavat et bucca foculum excitat et sonat unctis  
strigilibus et pleno componit lineae gutto.  
Haec inter pueros varie properantur, at ille  
iam sedet in ripa taetrumque novicius horret  
porthmea nec sperat caenosi gurgitis alnum  
infelix nec habet quem porrigat ore trientem.

With the final line of this passage I connect now, in my thoughts, the closing passage of Swift, *Battle of the Books*:

So Boyle pursued, so fled this pair of friends. Finding at length their flight was vain, they bravely joined, and drew themselves in phalanx. First Bentley threw a spear with all his force, hoping to pierce the enemy's breast; but Pallas came unseen, and in the air took off the point, and clapped on one, of lead, which, after a dead bang against the enemy's shield, fell blunted to the ground. Then Boyle, observing well his time, took up a lance of wondrous length and sharpness; and, as this pair of friends compacted stood close side by side, he wheeled him to the right, and, with unusual force, darted the weapon. Bentley saw his fate approach, and flanking down his arms close to his ribs, hoping to save his body, in went the point, passing through arm and side, nor stopped nor spent its force, till it had also pierced the valiant Wotton, who, going to sustain his dying friend, shared his fate. As when a skilful cook has trussed a pair of woodcocks, he, with iron skewer, pierces the tender sides of both, their legs and wings close pinioned to the ribs, so was this pair of friends transfixed, till down they fell, joined in their lives, joined in their deaths, so closely joined, that Charon would mistake them both for one, and waft them over Styx for half his fare.

In verse 268, Juvenal turns to discuss the *pericula noctis*. Among these he lists the liability to insult at

the hands of some insolent aristocrat. But worse than this is the danger of foot-pads (302-304), or even from the *grassator* (305-308). To the situation Juvenal had in mind one can find endless parallels in writings which have to do with life in England or in Ireland in the eighteenth century. Compare, for example, what Dickens, in Chapter I of *A Tale of Two Cities*, has to say of life in England in 1775:

In England, there was scarcely an amount of order and protection to justify much national boasting. Daring burglaries by armed men, and highway robberies, took place in the capital itself every night; families were publicly cautioned not to go out of town without removing their furniture to upholsterers' warehouses for security; the highwayman in the dark was a City tradesman in the light, and, being recognized and challenged by his fellow-tradesman whom he stopped in his character of "the Captain" gallantly shot him through the head and rode away; the mail was waylaid by seven robbers, and the guard shot three dead; and then got shot dead himself by the other four, "in consequence of the failure of his ammunition", after which the mail was robbed in peace; that magnificent potentate, the Lord Mayor of London, was made to stand and deliver on Turnham Green, by one highwayman, who despoiled the illustrious creature in sight of all his retinue.

In Henry Esmond, Book III, Chapter XI, at the beginning, occurs the following passage:

Beatrix's departure took place within the hour, her maid going with her in the post-chaise, and a man armed on the coach-box to prevent any danger of the road. Esmond and Frank thought of escorting the carriage, but she indignantly refused their company, and another man was sent to follow the coach, and not to leave it till it had passed over Hounslow Heath on the next day.

In Henry Esmond again, Book II, Chapter V, near the end, there is a reference to the road from London to Chelsea as bad and "infested with footpads".

Two passages from Thackeray's novel, *Barry Lyndon Esq.*, are worth quoting here. One occurs in Chapter XIV:

After having witnessed the splendours of civilized life abroad, the sight of Dublin in the year 1771, when I returned thither, struck me with anything but respect. It was savage as Warsaw almost, without the regal grandeur of the latter city. The people looked more ragged than any race I have ever seen, except the gipsy hordes along the banks of the Danube. There was, as I have said, not an inn in the town fit for a gentleman of condition to dwell in. Those luckless fellows who could not keep a carriage and walked in the streets at night, ran imminent risks of the knives of the women and ruffians who lay in wait there,—of a set of ragged savage villains, who knew neither the use of shoe nor razor; and as a gentleman entered his chair or his chariot, to be carried to his evening rout, or the play, the flambeaux would light up such a set of wild gibbering Milesian faces as would frighten a genteel person of average nerves. I was luckily endowed with strong ones; besides, had seen my amiable countrymen before.

The other occurs in Chapter XVI:

I have said, in a former chapter of my biography, that the kingdom of Ireland was at this period ravaged by various parties of banditti; who, under the name of Whiteboys, Oakboys, Steelboys, with captains at their

head, killed proctors, fired stacks, houghed and maimed cattle, and took the law into their own hands.

For brigandage in ancient Italy, reference may be made to Lanciani, *Ancient Rome in the Light of Recent Discoveries*, 208-213. For brigandage in modern Italy, reference may be made to Washington Irving, *Sketch Book*.

In conclusion, I copy, more fully, part of a paragraph from an essay of James Russell Lowell, *A Good Word for Winter*, to which I have already made reference, in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 9.137:

. . . . Indeed, it is only within a century or so that the search after the picturesque has been a safe employment. It is not so even now, in Greece or Southern Italy. Where the Anglo-Saxon carves his cold fowl, and leaves the relics of his picnic, the ancient or mediaeval man might be pretty confident that some ruffian would try the edge of his knife on a chicken of the Platonic sort, and leave more precious bones as an offering to the genius of the place. The ancients were certainly more social than we, though that, perhaps, was natural enough, when a good part of the world was still covered with forest. They huddled together in cities as well for safety as to keep their minds warm.

C. K.

## AENEID 2.781 AND AENEID 3 AGAIN

### Aeneas's Attitude Towards Visions

In an earlier paper<sup>1</sup>, I expressed the belief that Aeneid 2. 781 is not necessarily inconsistent with Aeneid 3, because *Hesperia* in that line may be interpreted as meaning simply a Western land, not specifically Italy. It was also suggested in a note at the close that evidence of a different character may be found to reinforce this line of argument. Such evidence is to be sought in a consideration of Aeneas's attitude toward the various visions or manifestations that appear to him as messengers of the omnipotent and immutable fates.

These messengers are usually the gods, who themselves seem to bear much the same attitude towards the fates as Aeneas does in turn towards the gods. What the fates have willed, the gods cannot alter<sup>2</sup>. But the gods at least know the fates. Man cannot know them without the interposition of the gods.

Thus the Trojans set out on their wanderings uncertain whither the fates will bear them<sup>3</sup>; and so, in their need of guidance they are driven along by the omens sent by the gods<sup>4</sup>—omens which they receive in constant succession throughout Book 3<sup>5</sup>. Never do they show the slightest hesitation about doing the gods' will, once it seems to be understood.

Just so, when Mercury comes to stir up Aeneas during his slothful delay in Carthage<sup>6</sup>, Aeneas deliberates not as to *whether* he will or will not obey, but merely *how* to obey<sup>7</sup>; and, fortified by his faith, he remains unshaken

<sup>1</sup>See *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 13.200-212.

<sup>2</sup>Compare 10.464 ff., 471-472, 622 ff.; 11.584 ff.; 12.147 ff.

<sup>3</sup>7. . . . <sup>4</sup>3.5. Compare 5.56-57, and Mr. Glover's discussion of this passage in his *Virgil*, 218.

<sup>5</sup>See 3.26, 59-61, 89, 137 ff., 143-144, 148 ff.

<sup>6</sup>4.259 ff. <sup>7</sup>4.283-286. Compare 281-282.